

Message Text

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TO USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090981

FOLLOWING REPEAT KINSHASA 2959 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BRUSSELS,
PARIS, BUJUMBURA, KIGALI, DAR ES SALAAM, AND LUSAKA DATED
MAR 28, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2959

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, CG

SUBJECT: MOBUTU EXPRESSES CONCERN FOR SECURITY OF ZAIRE'S
EASTERN BORDERS

REF: KIGALI 447 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MOBUTU EXPRESSES CONCERN RE SECURITY OF ZAIRE'S
EASTERN FRONTIERS, CITING REPORTS OF US INTENTIONS TO PROVIDE
ARMS TO FRONT LINE STATES AND BUILD-UP OF CUBAN PRESENCE IN
BURUNDI. END SUMMARY

2. DURING MEETING MARCH 25, PRESIDENT MOBUTU MADE SOMEWHAT
VAGUE REFERENCE TO STATEMENT HE UNDERSTOOD AMB. ANDREW
YOUNG HAD RECENTLY MADE ADVOCATING THAT US PROVIDE MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO FRONT-LINE STATES. MOBUTU ASKED IF THIS REFLECTED
A SHIFT IN US POLICY; IF SO, HE WOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED
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THAT ARMS PROVIDED TANZANIA MIGHT END UP IN THE HANDS OF PRP
REBELS OPERATING ALONG THE ZAIRIAN-TANZANIAN BORDER.

3. I TOLD MOBUTU I WAS UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED
TO AMB. YOUNG. TO MY KNOWLEDGE US POLICY FIRMLY REMAINED ONE
OF FACILITATING A PEACEFUL, NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IN ZIMBABWE,
AND THEREBY AVOIDING A RESORT TO ARMED CONFLICT.

4. MOBUT THEN SHIFTED TO BURUNDI AND REPORTS THAT THE CUBANS WERE BEGINNING TO BUILD UP A PRESENCE THERE. HE SAID THIS, TOO, WOULD POSE A THREAT TO ZAIRE'S EASTERN REGIONS. I SAID I WAS AWARE OF SUCH REPORTS ALTHOUGH I HAD SEEN NO REAL CONFIRMATION OF SUCH A BUILD-UP. AS FOR THE PRP, I SAID IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THE ZAIRAN ARMY HAD BEEN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL IN ITS SWEEP OPERATIONS ALONG LAKE TANGANYIKA. MOBUTU CONFIRMED THIS WAS SO, MENTIONING IN THIS CONNECTION THE CONTINUED UTILITY OF PATROL BOATS PROVIDED BY THE US SOME YEARS AGO. WHEN I SAID I ALSO HAD THE IMPRESSION THERE MIGHT NOW BE BETTER COOPERATION BETWEEN BURUNDI AND ZAIRIAN AUTHORITIES IN KEEPING TRACK OF REBEL MOVEMENTS IN THE AREA, MOBUTU ACKNOWLEDGED ONLY THAT COOPERATION HAD IMPROVED "A LITTLE."

5. COMMENT: WHILE MOBUTU REMAINS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE THREAT FROM ANGOLA (SEPTEL, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE IS KEEPING AN ANXIOUS EYE ON ZAIRE'S EASTERN AS WELL AS SOUTHERN FLANK. FACT THE RWANDAN FOREIGN MINISTER IS SIMULTANEOUSLY EXPRESSING CONCERN TO US ABOUT SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN BURUNDI AND IN DOING SO IS STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF ZAIRE'S SECURITY AS WELL WOULD INDICATE THAT ZAIRIAN REF AND RWANDAN GOVERNMENTS MAY BE COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS TO ELICIT OUR ATTENTION. AMBASSADOR CRIGLER'S REJOINER TO FOREIGN MINISTER'S ASSERTION THAT WE ARE ABANDONING THE MOBUTU REGIME WAS WELL PUT. THE MINISTER COULD BE FURTHER ASSURED BY CITING PRESIDENT CARTER'S
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POSITIVE REPLY LAST WEEK TO MOBUTU'S LETTER APPEALING FOR SUPPORT OF THE MOBUTU PLAN, AND SUBSEQUENT EDITORIALS IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS IDENTIFYING US AS ONE OF ZAIRE'S "TRUE FRIENDS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES."

6. ACTION REQUESTED: ANY LIGHT DEPARTMENT CAN SHED ON STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO AMB. YOUNG (PARA ONE ABOVE) WOULD BE USEFUL IN OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO SET MOBUTU STRAIGHT RE US POLICY IN AFRICA. CUTLER UNQUOTE VANCE

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